

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. ***(Currently Amended)*** A support fabric provided with pockets for accommodating stiffening means, comprising:

a first woven layer and a second woven layer joined to each other by stitch bonding along a length of the support fabric;

a plurality of pocket areas configured to receive one or more of the stiffening means;

a plurality of non-pocket areas located between the pocket areas;

said first woven layer comprising first threads and said second woven layer comprising second threads, and at least one of said first threads extending into said second woven layer and said second threads extending into said first woven layer such that said first woven layer and said second woven layer are continuously joined to each other by stitch bonding for an entire length of each non-pocket area of said plurality of non-pocket areas;

said first woven layer and said second woven layer separated from each other in said plurality of pocket areas such that interior surfaces of said first woven layer and said second woven layer bound a cavity for receiving the stiffening means, each pocket of said plurality of pockets having an opening for inserting one of the stiffening means.

2. ***(Previously Presented)*** The support fabric as claimed in claim 1, wherein said stiffening means comprises stiffeners of the stay type.

3. ***(Previously Presented)*** The support fabric as claimed in claim 1, wherein

said stiffening means have a therapeutic and/or comfort function.

4. *(Withdrawn)* A method for producing support fabric, comprising: producing two woven layers that are superimposed and joined by bonding stitches in order to form unitary parts of the support fabric; then, in a predetermined cycle, separating said layers a given distance apart in certain areas and then moving the certain areas together again and rejoining the certain areas in order to successively make one or more profiled pockets for subsequently inserting and accommodating external stiffening means , and , during production of the support fabric, said pockets being partially closed leaving an insertion opening for fitting said stiffening means.

5. *(Withdrawn)* The production method as claimed in claim 4, wherein selvages are established, one being closed over an entire length of the support fabric and another being partially closed apart from in an area of pockets in order to allow insertion of said stiffening means into said pockets.

6. *(Withdrawn)* The production method as claimed in claim 4, wherein the openings of the pockets open out over a width of the support fabric.

7. *(Withdrawn)* Use of the support fabric obtained by using the method as claimed in claim 4 for producing medical belts for lumbar support.

8. *(Withdrawn)* Use of the support fabric obtained by using the method as claimed in claim 4 for producing post-surgery or abdominal belts.

9. *(Withdrawn)* Use of the support fabric obtained by using the method as claimed in claim 4 for producing orthoses.

10. *(Withdrawn)* Use of the support fabric obtained by using the method as claimed in claim 4 for producing strapping.

11. (New) A support fabric provided with pockets for accommodating stiffening means, comprising:

a first woven layer and a second woven layer joined to each other by stitch bonding along a length of the support fabric;

a plurality of pocket areas configured to receive one or more of the stiffening means;

a plurality of non-pocket areas located between the pocket areas;

said first woven layer and said second woven layer separated from each other in said plurality of pocket areas such that interior surfaces of said first woven layer and said second woven layer bound a cavity for receiving the stiffening means, each pocket of said plurality of pockets having an opening for inserting one of the stiffening means; and

wherein said first woven layer comprises first threads and said second woven layer comprises second threads, and at least one of said first threads extending into said second woven layer and said second threads extending into said first woven layer to join said first woven layer and said second woven layer to each other.